UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1997/NGO/33
14 March 1997

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-third session
Agenda item 18

# ADVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Written statement submitted by North-South XXI, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[4 March 1997]

1. One of the great merits of the Commission on Human Rights is to dispel the fog surrounding violations of human rights through State practices and thus to establish more favourable conditions for human rights to be respected, in conformity with the international commitments of States. However, there is no denying the discriminatory element in the positions taken and the inequitable role played by certain great Powers, beyond any form of scrutiny whatsoever, which prevent the condemnation of "protected dictatorships", while ensuring the censure of States who are their political adversaries. The cause of human rights would certainly benefit if, rather than attacking or defending particular States, a study was made of the fundamental, direct and indirect causes of the human rights violations committed in States (their economic, social, cultural, political and institutional causes, etc.) and if short- and long-term remedies were sought.

2. In these times of globalization and construction of a "transnational civil society", the wish for partnership with the NGOs is often expressed; however, it occasionally appears to reflect a desire further to reduce the powers of the authorities, in line with the prevailing liberalism.

Nonetheless, where human rights are concerned, such a partnership is particularly operative, provided that the NGOs are uninfluenced by reasons of State and are not surrogates of the great Powers; in addition, systematically resorting to NGOs, within the framework of the Commission on Human Rights, to identify the causes of and remedies for human rights violations would be particularly effective. NGOs are less effective, however, as substitutes for States. The creation by North-South XXI of the North-South Institute for intercultural dialogue has been inspired by such a desire to find an explanation for the rationale of repression and to determine the relationship between democracy and development by means of a multidisciplinary approach.

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